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“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”
Psalms 25:14

THIS text is a great deep, but at the outset we must say that we have neither the time nor the skill at this time to attempt to fathom it. Our business just now is not so much to dive into its profound mystery, as to skim over its sparkling surface, to touch it with our wing as the swallow sometimes does the brook, leaving its soundings still unexplored. The current of thought here is too deep and too broad for the short meditation of a weekday evening. But where the very surface is rich, as it were, with “dust of gold,” we cannot fail, if God the Holy Spirit blesses us, to be enriched by even the superficial reflections we may gather up from it.

“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.” Mark the word used—“THE LORD”—JEHOVAH in the original—the I AM THAT I AM. The very name is associated in the thought of every right-minded person with awe. Is it not the name of the one only living and true God and none that take it in vain shall be held guiltless?

The gods of the heathen are no gods, but our God made the heavens. It is by Him that the heavens were stretched out as a curtain, and as a tent to dwell in. He is the Preserver of all things. In Him “we live, and move, and have our being.” As we find Him manifested, both in the book of nature and in the book of Revelation He is a God “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.”

The Lord is a good God, and we cannot think of Him without awe. If you have ever heard His voice in pealing thunder or the rolling avalanche, or if you have seen the flashes of His spear in the lightning of the tempest, or if you have marked His going upon the mighty waves at the tempestuous sea, you must have felt within yourselves that He is high and mighty—in truth, a terrible God!

Yet it seems from our text that there are some persons in the world in whom all emotions of dread in connection with God are suppressed by feelings of quite another kind. Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, they have evidently passed through the clouds, and have come to the other side of the darkness, for “the secret of the LORD is with them.”

Before Him goes the pestilence, and hot burning coals are cast forth at His feet, but these persons must evidently have been preserved from the devouring pestilence by some mysterious power, and have escaped those burning coals by some gracious deliverance. They have come into familiarity with God, they know His secret, and He shows to them what He does not make known to other men, His covenant, the counsel of His will. There are such persons in the world now, to whom the Eternal Majesty is so tempered by infinite mercy that they can devoutly sing—

*“The God who rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
Who rides upon the stormy skies,
And manages the seas.*

*This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love;*

*He shall send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above."*

Think of "the Lord," then, according to this grand revelation of His name—JEHOVAH. Oh! that your thoughts of Him might bow you down with the lowly worship of the bright cherubim, and make you veil your faces as they do! Oh! that you might be led to feel how great God is, and how little you are! Oh! that grace were now given you to draw near to God, and that the passage on which we have alighted might become a place of communion with Him.

Observe, then, first of all, *a glorious privilege which may be possessed*, secondly, *a favored class of people who do possess it*, and thirdly, *a choice and peculiar manifestation which God makes to them*.

I. THERE IS A GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE WHICH MAY BE POSSESSED.

The word "secret" here might, with greater propriety, be translated "friendship." "The friendship of the LORD is with them that fear him," but it also signifies in its root that conversation which familiar friends hold with each other. Conversation in its most cherished exercise, that homely intercourse which springs from mutual confidence, and is on the part of one man the unbosoming of himself to another, is thus implied.

If I may open it up in a phrase, it means, "The amity of true friendship." Such is the favor vouchsafed to those who fear God. But taking the word as it stands (for I dare say the translators weighed all these variations well before they chose the one before us), we will endeavor to give amplitude to the sense, while we keep to the word "secret."

Beyond a doubt, then, *those who fear God have the secret of His presence revealed to them*. If a man rambles amidst the wonders of nature with an atheistic heart, he may look up to the snowy peaks, and down again upon the sweet grassy slopes, he may listen to the music of the waterfall, he may stand and admire the eagle as it soars aloft, or watch the wild goat as he leaps from crag to crag, and all these things may be to him but so much animated nature—matter in so many various shapes, and nothing more.

I suppose it is possible for men to be familiar with all that is beautiful and sublime in the world of nature, that "living visible garment of God," and yet never catch the secret of His presence, the traces of His handiwork, or the whisper of His voice. How different it is with the man who fears God, who has bowed before God's justice, and seen it satisfied through the atoning sacrifice of Calvary! Such a man, as he looks upon the things that are made, those silent witnesses of the eternal power and Godhead, says, "My Father made them all!"

"Not hear God?" saith he, "I as distinctly heard God speak in the thunderclap as I have heard my own father's voice!" Not see God? Why, the veil seems thin that hides His glorious features, while the works shine transparent that unveil His wondrous attributes, so that to the Christian it becomes a moral phenomenon that there should be people in the world who can survey the gorgeous plan, the unfailing order, and the ample furniture, as it were, of this earth, with its wonderful adaptation of the means to the end, and then peer upwards to the heavens so grandly garnished, and contemplate the celestial bodies, ever restless, ever orderly in their motions, yet fail to apprehend the greatness, the wisdom, the goodness of the Creator. To us He is apparent everywhere—

*"These are Thy works, Father of good, Almighty!
Thine this universal frame!"*

He knows, he feels that, fallen as he is, he can, while walking through this world, commune with God as Adam did ere paradise to him was lost. The secret of God's presence is with them that fear Him. We have heard of some who have said that they have never had any consciousness of the existence of spirit. Very likely, very likely. I do not suppose, either that pigs or asses, or any dumb driven cattle, ever had any spiritual apprehensions.

But some of us have a very clear consciousness thereof, and as honest men giving testimony, we claim to be believed. Nay, what is more, we are certain that we have not only a consciousness of the existence of spirit, but of a great and all-pervading Spirit we have a like clear knowledge. We cannot be mistaken about it. We are as sure that there is a God as we are that there is a world, nay, sometimes more persuaded of the one than of the other. It is a part of our real consciousness.

We have come to feel it, not merely in our imaginative moods, but when all our faculties were in full play, the secret of the existence of the pervading presence of God is with us if we fear Him. Nay, it is not only in the open fields, amidst the enchanting scenery of the world, but much more in shady nooks and secluded places that we have found that presence.

Some months ago, I sat by the side of a woman who had not left her bed for several years. It was in a sloping room at the top of a cottage, the only walls were just the plastering that roofed it in. The room was hung round with texts of Scripture, which she had painted as she had been lying there. She was always full of pain, restless nights and weary days were her constant lot.

When I sat down to talk to her, she said, "You cannot tell how the presence of God has made this room seem to me, sir! It has been such a palace that I have not envied kings upon their thrones when I have enjoyed the visits of Christ here. Though I have not known a wakeful hour free from pain for years, I assure you this chamber has been a very heaven to me."

She was not an excitable, hysterical, silly, weak-minded woman. Far from that, she was as simple and sincere a creature as you might have found in fifty miles' walk. The daughter of an honest, smock-frocked laborer, and his quiet, godly wife.

There was this poor woman declaring that God was ever in her room. As I talked with her, I began to feel that her witness was true, and to think that I had not felt more conscious of the presence of the Almighty among the baseless, boundless mountains, or upon the watery plain of the vast ocean, where mighty waves in ceaseless concert roll, or even in the midst of the vast congregation, when on the Sabbath our solemn hymns, the outflow of feeling hearts, have swelled to heaven with music such as pleases well the ear of God.

Thus I did then perceive the mysterious secret of His presence when I lingered by the lowly couch of His suffering saint. Why, had some skeptic called in there, and merely suggested that "there is no God," we should have laughed him to scorn, or else, peradventure, our pity for this ignorance might have turned our laughter into tears. Truly the secret of God's presence everywhere is with them that fear Him. They trust Him, they love Him, they lean upon Him, and they get to feel that He is, and they have communion with Him as a man communes with his friend.

And this secret of God's presence *leads to the discerning of His hand*. To the man who looks no higher than second causes, things that baffle his shallow wits like a continued drought in spring, or unintermitting rain in harvest, seem alike dreadful and bewildering. Though he cannot understand, perhaps, the laws of fluidity, he is likely enough to murmur at the dispensations that frustrate his conjectures, but the Christian says, "I believe that God ordains every drop of rain, or withholds every genial shower, when He binds up the bottles of heaven. I can find philosophy in faith." And here he is right. It has well been said, "There is more wisdom in a whispered prayer than in the ancient lore of all the schools," and wonderful it is how this simple, silent trust gives the Christian man calmness and composure.

At sea, when the tempest rages and the billows roar, the man who knows of nothing but the devouring element beneath and around him, full of alarm, may sigh to the winds, but the Christian, who firmly believes that God holds the sea in the hollow of His hand, and that "all must come, and last, and end, as shall please his heavenly Friend," waits the leisure of the righteous God, commits his way unto Him, assured that He has control over the storm and fulfils His great decrees, unmoved by threatening clouds or scolding winds.

Faith feeds his fortitude. Listening with the ears of faith, he constantly hears the footfalls of JEHOVAH. In the loneliness of his sorrow, he catches a sweet whisper, saying to him, "It is I, be not afraid." The divine presence, and the divine hand, mysteriously hidden though they be from all mortal

eyes, are discerned by such as live in fellowship with God, for “the secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.”

Hence it is that *the child of God carries on a secret intercourse with heaven*. See him on his knees, he talks with God, he pours out his heart before the Lord, and in return—whether the world chooses to believe it or not, it is a matter of fact with us—in return the great Invisible Spirit pours into the praying heart a stream of sacred comfort, keeps it in its time of trouble, and gives it to rejoice in its moments of sadness.

Oh! some of you are living witnesses that God talks with men. Had you never talked with Him, you would not be qualified to speak upon this question, but knowing that He hears you, and being conscious that He also answers you and speaks to you, you can declare, and rejoice in the declaration, that the secret of the Lord in this respect is with you. Why, the Christian makes communications to God of such a sort as he would not venture to make to his fellow men.

I consider the confession of sins to a priest most degrading to that priest. To make his ear the common sewer of all the filth of a parish is horrible, and for any man to tell out his sin at all to another is depraving to his own mind. But to tell it to God is a different matter, to lay bare his bosom, to let its inmost secrets be exposed to the great Searcher of hearts, to pour out what one cannot say in words, nor even perhaps convey with signs before the great eye which still sees, the great Searcher who discerns it all. Oh! this is blessed!

Every child of God can say, when he is in a right state, that there is no reserve or disguise in the dealings of his soul with God. Is there a care which I dare not cast on Him? Is there a sin which I would not humbly and tearfully confess before Him? Is there a want for which I would not seek relief from Him? Is there a dilemma in which I would not consult Him? Is there ought so confidential that I may not divulge to man, but which I may not breathe out to my God?

Oh! when we are in spiritual health, we do verily pour our hearts before the Lord to the very dregs. We wear our heart upon our sleeve as we draw near to the Most High. I tell Him all my woes and weaknesses, and all my sorrows, and sins likewise, so my secret is with Him. Then the Lord is pleased in return to manifest Himself unto His people.

He shows to His trustful saints what He never shows to faithless sinners. When the sinner reads the Bible, he sees only the letter, that is all he can see, but the Christian sees the Spirit of the Word. He perceives that “within this awful volume lies the mystery of mysteries,” and he is one of those—

*“Happiest of the human race,
To whom their God hath given grace,
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch to force the way.”*

Thus he enters into the secret chamber of revelation, while the unconverted, the unregenerated, the unsanctified, stand in the outside court, and find no entrance within the veil. The heart of God is poured out into the Christian’s heart, so far as the Infinite can discover itself to the finite, and as we tell the Lord what we are, He is pleased to tell us what He is.

Surely, dear friends, as these intercommunications go on, *it would be hard to say how richly the inmost secrets of God may become known to His privileged people*. Shall I be understood if I say that man may know a great deal more than he thinks he knows, he may know more of God than he knows he knows, for it is one thing to know, and another thing to know that we know. Do you notice how John says, “That we may know that we know Him”?—as if we might know Him, and yet be hardly able to recognize how much we know Him.

Now, many a time you have known the secret decrees of God, though you have not known that you knew them. “Oh!” say you, “how is that?” Well, God decreed, purposed, and determined to save such and such a soul, you felt an irresistible impulse to go and pray for that soul as you had never prayed

before. You mentioned that particular person by name before God, and then you went out and exercised all the spiritual grace you had in order to bring that soul to the knowledge of the truth, and God blessed your endeavor, and that soul was saved.

Now, how was this? Why, the secret purpose of God had been made to act mysteriously upon you, you became God's instrument, His conscious instrument, in the fulfillment of it, and thus you were made privy to the decree, though scarcely aware that you were so.

I do think there is such a harmony between the feeling of Christians and the purposes of God that you and I can never tell where these two unite, or where they separate. It often seems as if the Lord said to His people, "Now, I have ordained such and such things, in the volume of My Book they are written, and you shall desire and purpose just such things in your heart, and so the things that are in your heart shall carry out the things that are in My Book, I will not let you know it so as to go and tell it to others, but I will make you so know it that you will go and act upon it, I will let the secret of the Lord be with you."

We know not how often God gives His people premonitions of what He is about to do, nor how frequently, unknown to ourselves, we take a course of action which is precisely the right course, without our knowing why we took it, only that we are led and guided by the Holy Spirit into such a track. I believe that this is especially the case with the ministry of the Word. I have sometimes been very sharply taxed about this matter.

I was a few days ago upbraided by a good soul for exposing all her faults from the pulpit. I have been, not merely now and then, but very often, thought by some people to be so dreadfully personal that they did not know how they could bear it, and yet I never saw those people, except from the pulpit, and did not know anything at all about them.

The Word of God is quick and powerful, and "is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." When, therefore, we ask God to direct us in speaking His Word, it is no marvel that the effect is searching. Ah! and did we always, with all our hearts, give ourselves up to the motions of His Holy Spirit, we would be led and guided in a mysterious manner which we ourselves should scarcely understand, and make full proof of the fact that the "secret of the LORD is with them that fear him."

I will venture to say that *the Christian gets to know more of God, of the real essence of God, by grace than all the philosophies in the world could ever have taught him*. I read of God that He is a loving Father, that He is gracious towards the children of men. Now, if I fear Him with a filial reverence, He disposes me, by His grace, to love the souls of men, makes me tender and compassionate. Thus I get to apprehend, by a devout sympathy, something of what His love, and tenderness, and compassion must be.

To meditate upon the attributes of God is one means of seeking knowledge, but to be conformed to His image is quite another way of understanding Him. Not till God makes you like Himself can you know what He is. In proportion, then, as we grow in grace, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit more abundantly, we shall be more and more admitted into the secret of the Lord.

The day is coming, beloved, when we shall know more of God by our hearts—to say nothing of our heads, which probably never will be able to find out the Almighty to perfection—we shall know more of God by our hearts than we ever thought it possible to know, because our hearts shall be filled with Himself, everything obnoxious to Him shall be chased out, and we shall be like His only begotten Son, dwelling in His light, and basking in His love forever!

"The secret of the LORD," as to His very character, "is with them that fear him." As they thus go from strength to strength, their heart pulsates with a love like the divine love, their souls yearn towards sinners with a benevolence like the divine benevolence, they begin to make sacrifices comparable, in kind, though not in degree, to the great sacrifice of God when He spared not His only begotten Son. Their hearts move, their spirit yearns, they cry over souls, as God is said to cry over them. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim...how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

Whenever God would picture Himself to us, He uses words suitable to our nature. But oh! how passing wonderful shall it be when God shall be seen in us, and we shall see God in ourselves, and so shall see God! That blessed promise, “The pure in heart shall see God,” is but another rendering of our text—“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.”

I wish it were in my power to explore this testimony of the Lord more fully, and expound it more clearly, but for the present I must leave these few simple thoughts with you, and pass on to observe that we have—

II. A REFERENCE TO A FAVORED CLASS OF INDIVIDUALS.

A peculiar privilege is conferred on a peculiar people, for it seems that the secret of the Lord is with some men, but not with others. Who are they who possess this sacred boon? A great outcry has been raised in this country of late about class and class interests. In our manufacturing districts particularly, the rights of the upper class, who find the capital, and the claims of the working class, who bring their skill and labor into the market, are paraded before us in hot debates, which often lead to an angry lock-out on the part of the employers, or a sullen strike on the part of the employed.

Such feuds seldom bring much credit to either party. A great deal may be said concerning some of each to their praise, and not a little concerning some of both to their censure. So long as the struggle lasts, it must cause much heart-burning. I would the day were come when all this class talk was over, that we felt and acknowledged the common ties and mutual obligations by which all men depend upon all men, each class being dependent for its welfare and prosperity upon each other class, even as “God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth.”

Still, there always will be a favored class. God has so ordained it. But let me say they will neither be accepted because they are rich, nor rejected because they are poor. The favored class before the Lord *hath nothing to do with any position in society.*

*“None are excluded thence, but those
Who do themselves exclude;
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude.”*

Neither hath this secret of the LORD ought to do with education. It is not with every Oxford graduate, it is only with a very few of them! The secret of the Lord is not with every Cambridge M.A., nor with every man who has taken his degree at any university. You may read the Scriptures in the original languages, with Hebrew and Greek you may be familiar. Excellent and profitable studies they are, but you cannot discover the secret of the Lord by mere classical attainments.

No mathematical researches or astronomical observation can discover it to you. In vain does one mount to heaven and thread the spheres, alike in vain does another walk the earth, and conjure the old rocks to tell him what happened before Adam held the lease of its broad acres, or tilled its soil. No, it is beyond the province of human learning, as it is foreign to the privilege of creature rank.

Some people think that the secret of the Lord is lodged in mystic rites, and draped in gorgeous ceremonies. There is among us a sect of ritualists, which professes to have acquired it. They pretend to derive it from some man in lawn sleeves who put his hand on their heads, and if they cannot exactly communicate it themselves, yet they can communicate a great deal, for they affirm that every little child sprinkled by them becomes, without more ado, a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven!

With their guild I have no fellowship, of their weird arts I know little. Still, they say it is so, and it is all right with the little ones, no doubt, if they die in infancy, for are they not buried in consecrated clay? Listen to these gentlemen, these “successors of the apostles,” these men who have “gifts” which empower them to declare and pronounce absolution and remission of sins. Do you hear the Gospel from

them? Well, you may from some of them, but then they tell you that they do not believe in the literal construction of the words they are paid to repeat, so they deliberately utter a lie!

Or listen to others of them. Do they give you the Gospel? Nay, they display themselves in petticoats and embroidered vestments, and such apparel as it were unlawful to appear in, save only when they are acting in their ecclesiastical theaters. You get no Gospel truth from them, nothing but priestcraft from beginning to end. Were they honest they would go at once to Babylon, to Rome, to the Mother of Abominations, and consort with their own kindred. Thus we say the rite of ordination confers no privileges, and restrains no abuses. It does not teach a man the secret of the Lord, for the best ordained priest in England may still be as ignorant of God, our enemies themselves being judges, as if he had never been ordained at all.

To whom, then, is it given to know the secret of the Lord, but to those who fear Him, and hallow His name? To be conscious that I have sinned, to be humbled before God on account of it, to behold Jesus Christ as the way of atonement, to accept Christ as my Savior, to come to God, blessing Him that I am saved through His dear Son, to feel a love to God because of His grace to me, to yield up myself to His service, by His Holy Spirit to be led to live to His glory—this it is to fear Him, and thus it is that His secret is with me.

“Why,” says one, “then the secret of the Lord may be with any poor servant girl!” Bless the Lord it may! “Oh! then,” says another, “the secret of the Lord may be with any humble workman, even though he is an illiterate and uneducated man!” Yes, certainly it may! “Then,” says yet another, “what becomes of the priesthood?” Why, I answer, we are all made priests. If we fear the Lord, we are admitted and initiated into the secret mysteries of religion, we become instructed in the way of the Lord, the Holy Spirit having promised that He will teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever Christ has told us.

Though we cannot claim rank, nor wealth, nor diploma, we can yet humbly say, “The secret of the LORD is with us, for He has taught us, by His grace, how to live upon Him, how to trust Him, how to serve Him.” “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.”

Do you answer to this description, my dear hearers? Do you walk in the fear of the Lord? Says one, “I am a member of a Dissenting church.” I do not inquire about that, for it has nothing to do with the secret. Do you fear God, I ask you? “Well,” says another, “I have always done my duty ever since I can remember, from my youth up.” That is your duty toward man, and it is well that you should never neglect it. But do you fear the Lord? Is the Lord the subject of your thoughts, the object of your love? And do you, therefore, revere and worship Him? If so, the promise is yours, and the privilege shall not be withheld from you.

“I want to know,” says one, “which is right among all the contending sects.” Well, go you to the Bible, search the Scriptures, yet not as one who is proud of his own wits, but rather as one who fears the Lord greatly, and inquires at His holy oracle prayerfully. Then, although you may not find every knotty point solved, or every quibble settled, you shall surely find this saying good, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

Come to the Lord for instruction, and there is nothing in His Word which He will keep back from you any more than from others, for “the secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.” And come to the Lord for guidance, and you shall not be left in doubt what fellowship of believers to join, for “it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.”

The last thing we have to notice is—

III. THE CHOICE AND PECULIAR MANIFESTATIONS WHICH GOD MAKES TO HIS PEOPLE.

He will show them His covenant. What a soft, sweet, encouraging assurance this covenant gives us! To see God in covenant is to find grace in His eyes. To serve a covenant God is perfect freedom and

exquisite delight. God out of Christ is a consuming fire. Luther was wont to say, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God.”

The fear with which we think of God is all terror, dread, and fright, in which we exceedingly tremble and quake, until He unveils Himself in this mellow light of the covenant of peace. For what could the vision do but scare me to destruction? But God, in the covenant of His dear Son, is the hope, the desire, the delight of everyone that is godly, and their fear is not that of horror, but that of homage.

What, then, does God teach His people concerning His covenant? Much every way. He shows them that His covenant is *everlasting*. It was made in Christ before the world began. It abides steadfast, and will forever remain unchangeable. So sure is it, that every blessing it provides is unconditional and irrevocable, being entailed upon all those who have an interest in its gracious provisions.

He teaches them the fullness of this covenant, that it contains all that is necessary for the life that now is, and for that which is to come. He teaches them the freeness of this covenant, that it was made with them in Christ Jesus, not because of their good works, but because of the abounding of His grace towards them.

He teaches them that this covenant is not the result of their tears or vows, their penitence or prayer, but that it is the cause of all these, ordered in all things and sure, it comprises all that their needs could lack, and all that their hearts could crave, it is all their salvation and all their desire. The Lord then shows His people that this covenant was made on their behalf. Ah! there is the beauty of it!

Each one of the blood-bought trophies of mercy is led to see that the covenant was made with David’s Lord for him. So each heir of heaven sets to his seal that God is true, and makes David’s protest his own—“Though my house be not so with God, yet he has made *with me* an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

He also shows His people that this covenant is made with them by sacrifice through the precious blood of Jesus, wherein God smells a sweet savor of rest. No covenant could avail them, except it were a covenant made with blood and based on propitiation. They understand that the old covenant of works broke through because the first Adam was not able to carry out his part of it. God spoke to Adam after this manner, “If thou wilt be obedient, thou and thy children shall be happy.” That “if” proved fatal. Adam could not observe the condition.

The second covenant is on another footing. It was made with Christ. “If thou wilt be obedient, thou and those in thee shall be blessed.” Christ was obedient, He kept the law, He suffered to the death His Father’s will, and we come, without an “if” or a “but” to inherit the blessing which Christ has merited for us.

Now it is no more, “If you do this, I will do that,” it is, “You *shall* do this, and I *will* do that.” “A new heart *will* I give you; and a right spirit *will* I put within you; you shall repent of sin; you shall follow in my ways; you shall love me; you shall serve me; you shall persevere in holiness; and I will bless you.” There is not an “if” nor a “but” nor a “peradventure” to foul the stream of God’s loving-kindness. The covenant was made with every elect soul in Christ beyond the hazard of a doubt, and beyond the chance of a forfeiture.

Oh! soul, has God ever shown you this covenant? Do I hear anyone murmur that it is a horrible doctrine? Then I am quite certain he has never been shown it. Or do I hear another affirm, that were he to believe it, he should live in sin? I think very likely he would, I do not doubt it. To sin is your propensity, whatever you believe.

But mind this, I do not exhort you to believe in that which has never been revealed to you, and has nothing to do with you. But yet another voice greets my ear, it is that of a penitent, who says, “I come to Christ just as I am, I welcome the promise, I thank God there is now nothing left for me to do in order to make the promise sure, or to make the covenant fast, I am a poor, lost, undone soul, and throw myself at the foot of the bloody tree, I look up to the Savior and say, ‘Jesus, I trust Thee to save me, I altogether trust Thee, I believe Thou hast saved me—saved me in such a way that I can never be lost, for the covenant that was made with me never can be broken, and I shall never be cast away.’”

Sure, then, dear friend, you have no wish to pamper with the lusts of the flesh, or to wallow in uncleanness. The doctrine does not instigate you to live in sin. You would be a monster indeed if it did. Nay, you will say, "If God has made a covenant with me, saved me from the curse, and endowed me with blessing, out of gratitude to Him, what is there I can render to Him for all His benefits? Nothing shall be too hard, nothing too heavy—

*“Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn;
Chosen of Him ere time began,
I choose Him in return.”*

Let slaves go and work under the rod of the taskmaster if they will! Let the sons of the bondwoman pour contempt on the inheritance of the seed of promise if they like, but a seed shall serve Him, and it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. The child of God has been shown the covenant, hence he knows he shall never be cast out of the family, for the love of the Father towards him will never change.

He cannot love us more, He will not love us less. Such love in Him begets more love in us. What manner of men ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant."

I can only pray that some hearts may be led to look to Jesus, that they may discover the choice secret. Christ is not only a party to the covenant, and the Representative of the covenant, but He is the very impersonation of the covenant itself. "I will give him," saith the Lord, "to be a covenant for the people."

Oh! if you have looked to Christ, you need not despair. He is holy, He is true, He has the key of David, which can unlock the secret treasury in which are stored all covenant blessings. Fear Him, it is the beginning of wisdom. Trust Him, it is the first breath of faith. Desire Him, as newborn babes crave milk. Oh! that the fear of the Lord may haunt you through the watches of the night, and abide with you all the day long. So may the Lord bless you now and forever. Amen.

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